



Huckleberry Finn - Mark Twain

Dialect and Local Colour

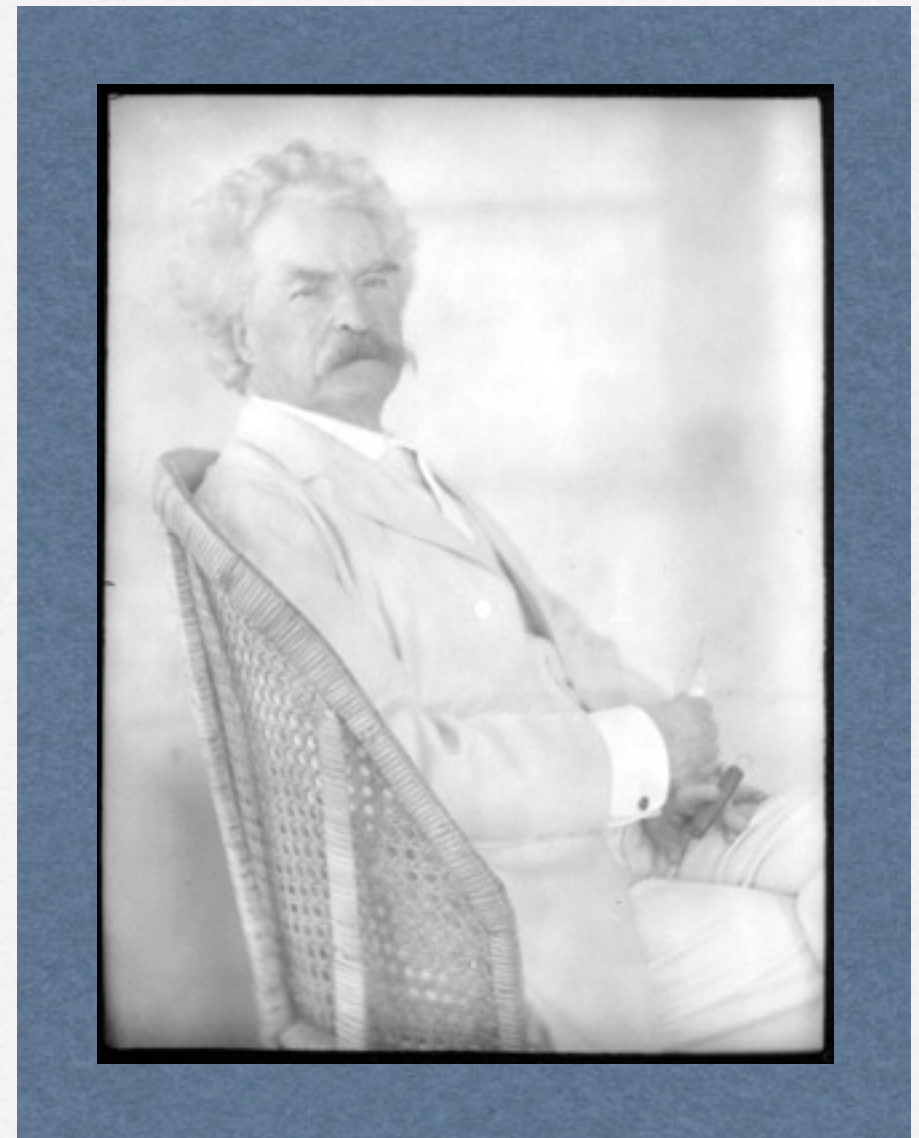
What *is* dialect?

- ❑ Dialect - The accent or pronunciation of words according to the place that the person speaking lives in.
- ❑ In Huckleberry Finn, Huck has a Southern American accent, more specifically a Missouri accent.



Dialect in Huck Finn

- ❑ Missouri-Negro dialect
- ❑ Backwoods South-Western dialect
- ❑ "Pike-County" dialect
- ❑ various derivatives of the "Pike-County" dialect
- ❑ You notice that the characters tend to talk in a similar fashion yet there are differences.



Dialect in Missouri



Did you know?
Elijah Wood who plays
Huckleberry Finn is a
British actor. He is also
known for his role as Frodo
Baggins in Lord Of The
Rings.
You must admit the accent
is pretty impressive!

"I don't give a damn for a man that can only spell a word one way."
-Mark Twain

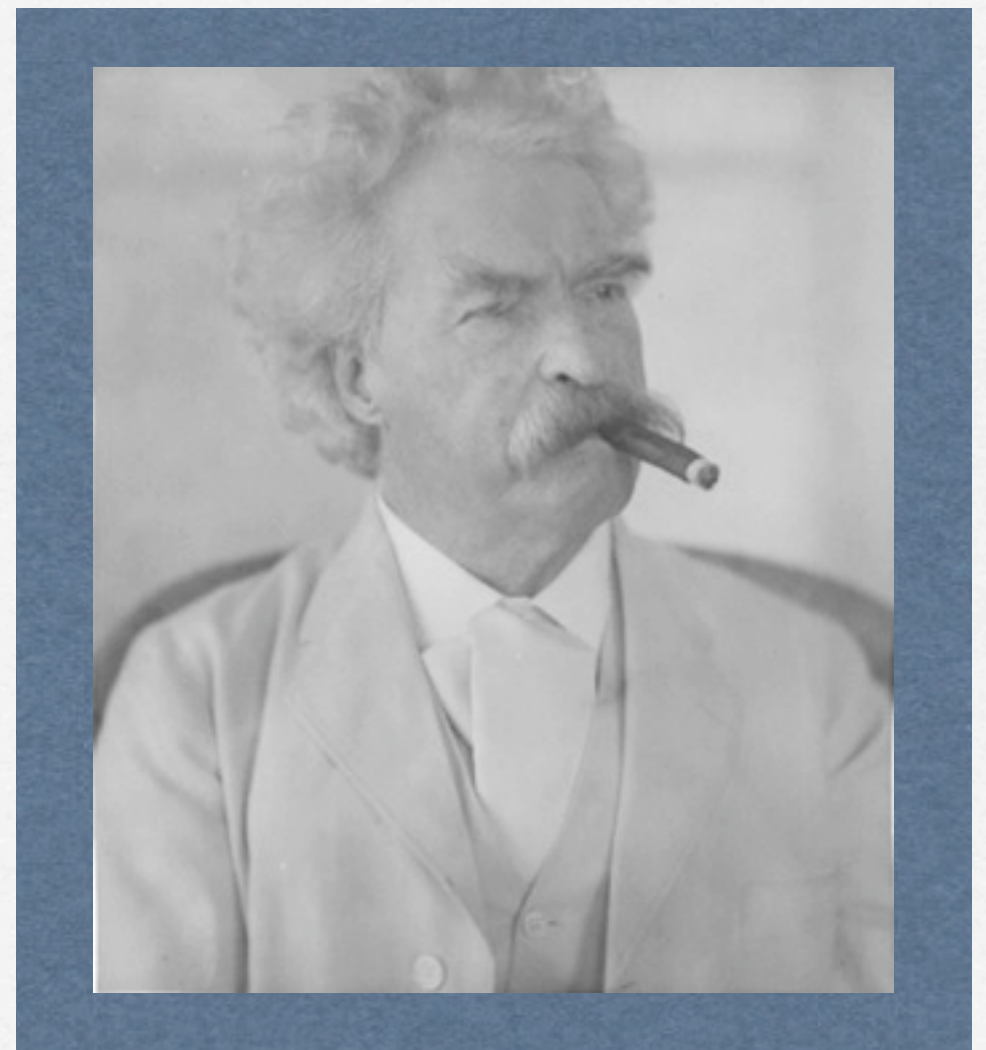
Twainisms....



- ❑ adding "some" to the ends of words - tiresome, lonesome etc.
- ❑ adding "a-" to some words - eg. "I sat down a-shaking"
- ❑ using "a" instead of "of" - e.g. could a, should a, would a
- ❑ using "'n" instead of "than" - e.g. more'n (more than)
- ❑ using "aint" and "bout"

Local Colour

- Local Colour - applied to fiction or verse which emphasizes its setting, being most concerned with the character of a district or of an era, as marked by its customs, dialect, costumes, landscape, or other peculiarities that have escaped standardizing cultural influences.



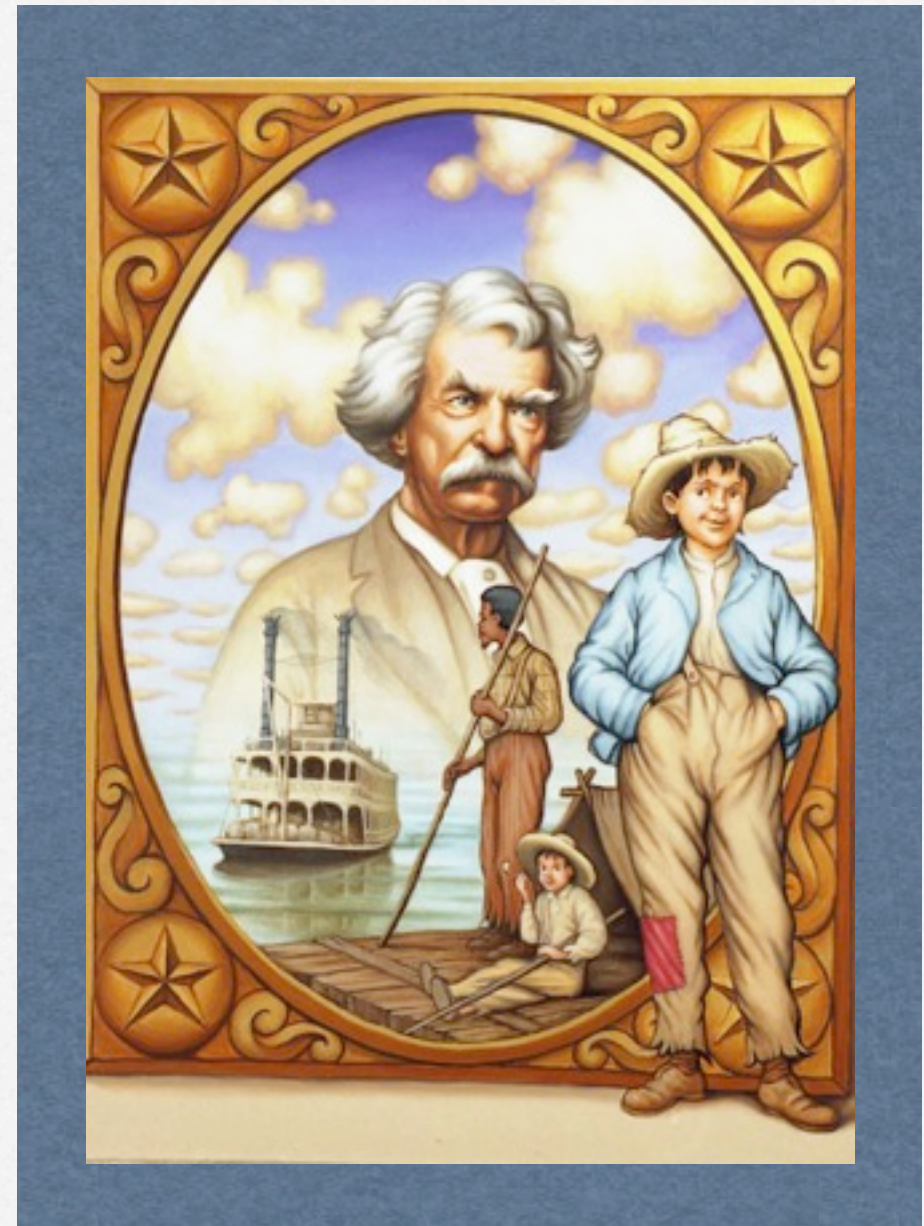
The Missouri Local Colour



- ❑ At the time, slaves were owned by most people.
- ❑ The people spoke with Southern-American accents which not only altered their way of speaking but also their vocabulary.
- ❑ The story is set along, and often makes reference to the Mississippi river.
- ❑ Everyone was expected to attend church although not everyone, like Huck, believed in God.
- ❑ Many people, including Huckleberry were very superstitious.
- ❑ Schooling was important although mainly done at home by tutors or family.

Realism - Local Colour

- ❑ Something that ties in well with local colour is the idea of realism.
- ❑ It was a way of life that many people chose at the time and for many years after that
- ❑ People made the decisions based on what they see rather than things like emotion, religion, beliefs, morals etc.



Realism - Local Colour



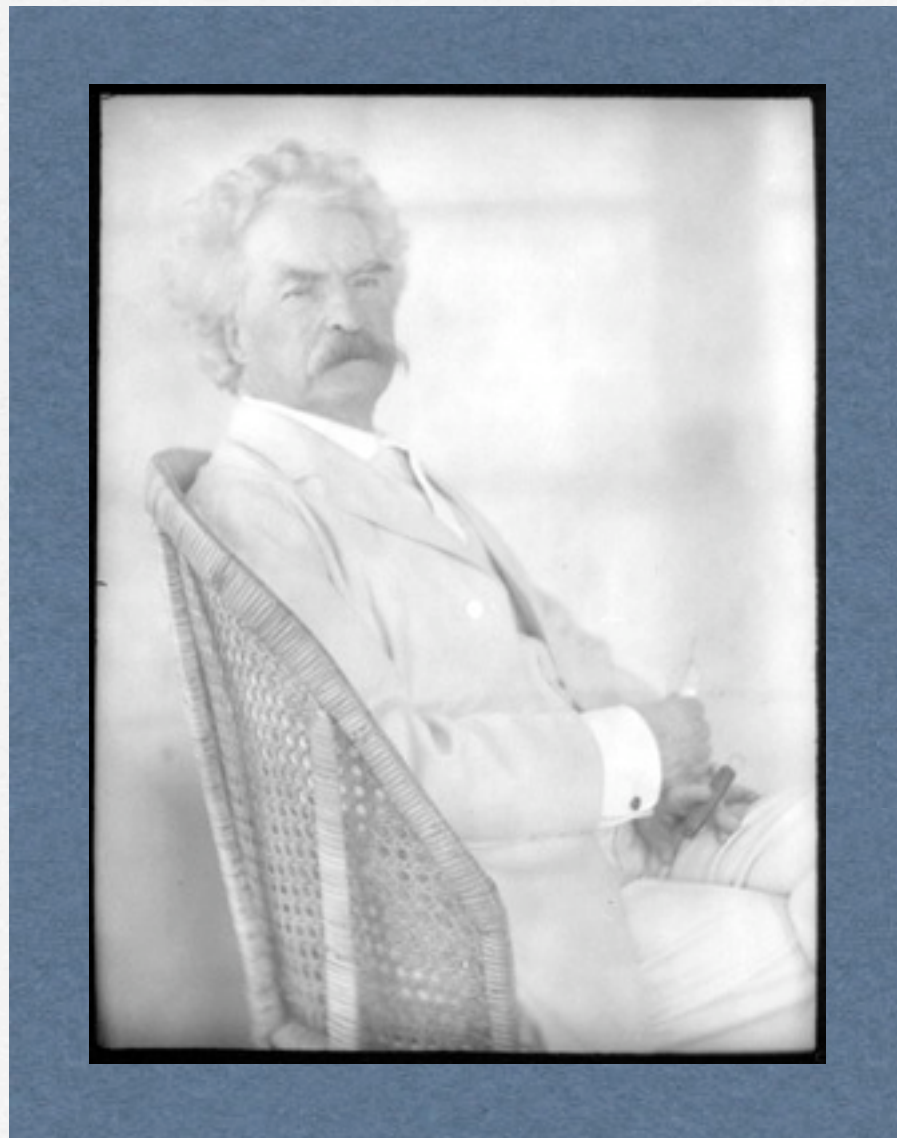
- Huckleberry is definitely a realist although his fellow characters differ in this way.
- The rest of the village and social environment, (local colour) that surrounds Huck is different to him. They do not follow the realist way of life, they are more focused on morals.
- This is one of the factors highlighting the fact that Huck is an exile of the town.

Discussion Question 1

- What kind of effect does Twain's use of the Southern-American accent have on our perception and opinion of Huckleberry and the other characters?

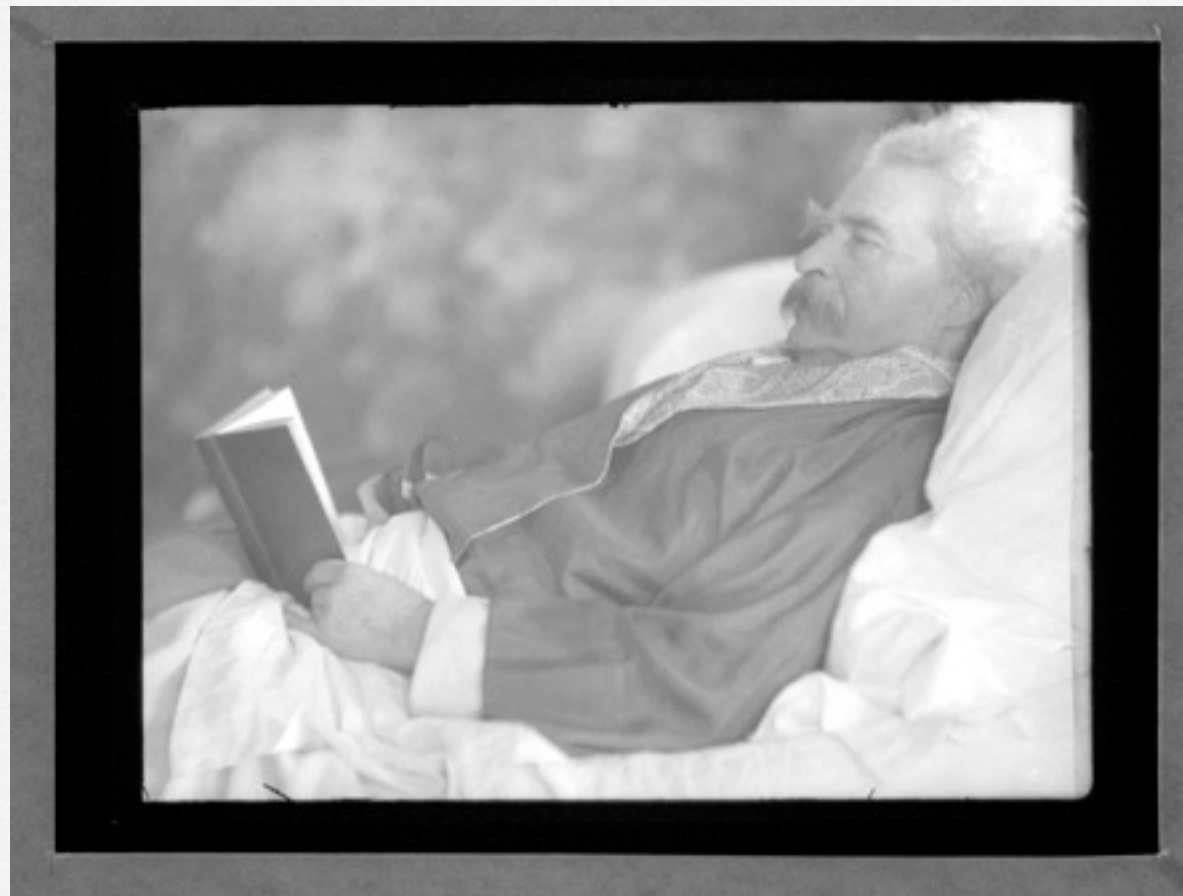


Sample Answer 1



- In my opinion, using this accent shows off Huckleberry's youth. It makes him seem innocent and a little simple minded. It also adds humour to the story and gives an insight into what Missouri would have actually been like during this time. The use of the Southern-American accent has a big effect on our perception of the characters and the place and story themselves.

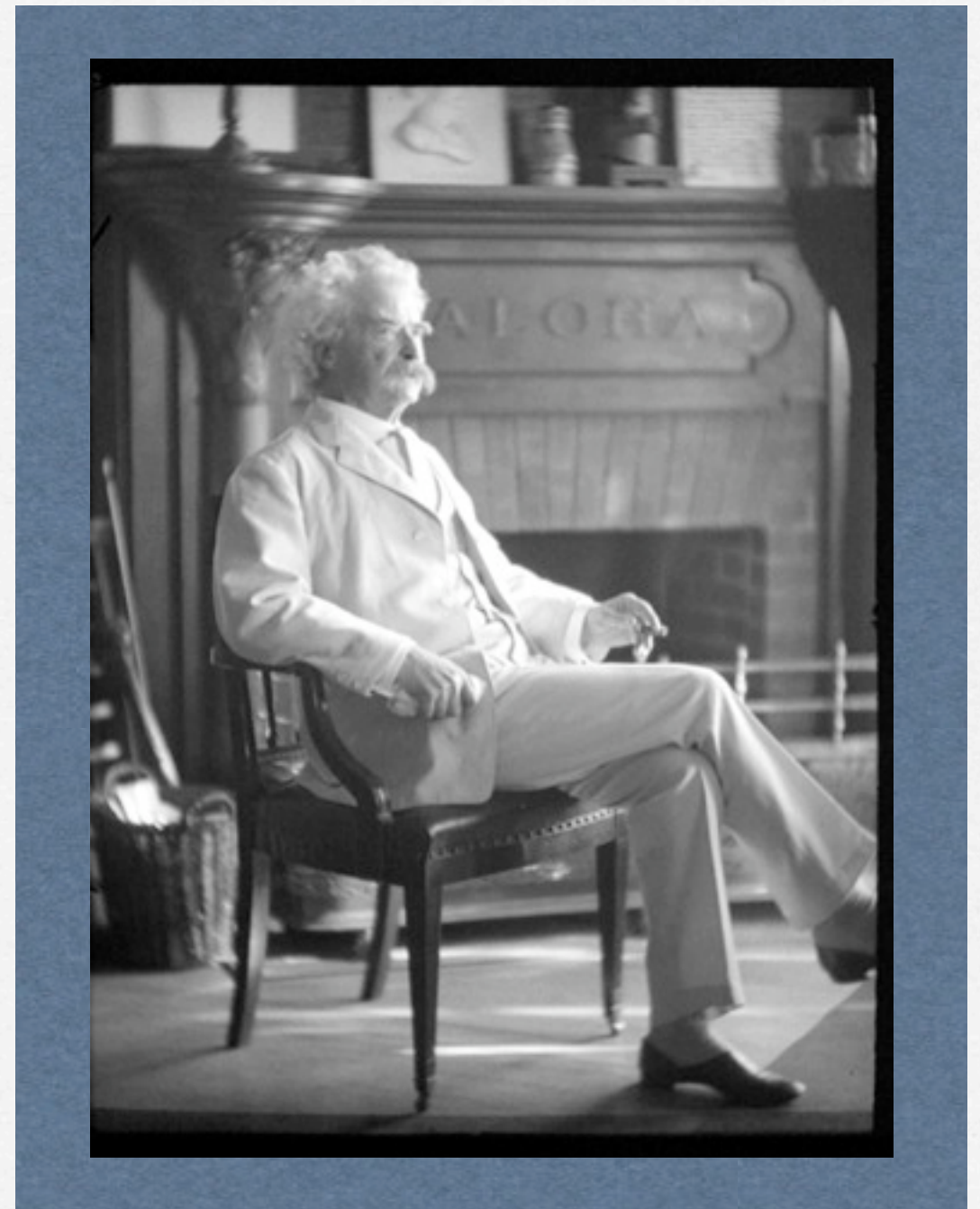
Discussion Question 2



- What impression does Twain give of Missouri at the time that Huckleberry Finn was set?

Sample Answer 2

- Twain gives us the impression that Missouri, or Southern-America was a very structured place to live. The people had their traditions and their beliefs and they were not supposed to be messed with. The social environment that Huckleberry Finn lives in is one that doesn't match his character well.



Discussion Question 3



- Do you think Mark Twain's use of Local Colour and Dialect help make The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn as famous as it is today?

Sample Answer 3

- Twain's use of dialect and colour definitely influenced the fame that his book received. It was rare to find a book that showed life in Southern America in so truthfully, so much so that Twain was called racist for writing some things. Also, his use of dialect in the structure of the writing made his book original and interesting.



Citations

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